

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: FY22 CDC Infectious Diseases and the Opioid Epidemic Program Funding Request

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Members Blunt and Cole:

The undersigned 229 public health, harm reduction, HIV, hepatitis, criminal justice reform, and community-based organizations urge you to increase critical funding to respond to the dramatic and ongoing overdose crisis by providing **\$120 million for the Infectious Diseases and the Opioid Epidemic program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Labor, HHS appropriations bill.** Funding increases would support and expand access to overdose prevention and syringe services programs (SSPs) to help stem the dramatically increasing number of overdose deaths. Additionally, we urge you to end the ban on the use of federal funding for syringes.

The United States is experiencing an ongoing drug overdose crisis, with more than 100,000 overdose deaths expected to be counted in 2020 and potentially that many in calendar year 2021. Overdose deaths recorded during 2020 are expected to have increased by more than 40% over the previous record year of 2019. SSPs effectively help prevent drug overdoses. They have the knowledge, contacts, and ability to reach people who use drugs; they provide naloxone and other overdose prevention resources; and they connect people to medical care and support, including Substance Use Disorder treatment. Congress must provide essential funding to support and expand access to syringe services programs at this critical time when their services are desperately needed to save lives. Approximately half of SSPs are experiencing reduced resources now and/or expect budget cuts as a result of the economic pressures of COVID-19. Additionally, Congress should remove federal restrictions on the use of syringes, which are critical to the functioning of SSPs and effectively help to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Overdose deaths have increased more dramatically among Black people and communities of color. From 2015 to 2018, overdose deaths among African Americans more than doubled (by 2.2 times) and among Hispanic people increased by 1.7 times while increasing among white, non-Hispanic people by 1.3 times. SSPs are effective at distributing naloxone - a drug which can prevent overdose deaths - both to people at risk of overdose as well as to other community members. A study from Massachusetts found a 46% reduction in opioid overdose mortality rates with substantially increased access to naloxone. With

additional resources, SSPs could increase ready access to naloxone and its use, which would help reduce the overdose deaths.

Currently, the nation has insufficient access to SSPs and most people at risk from overdose need significantly increased access to services. According to the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN), there are approximately 400 SSPs operating nationwide. Experts estimate that to sufficiently expand access to SSP programs, *the U.S. would require approximately 2,000 programs - 5 times the number in existence now.* The requested funding increase could provide a 10% increase to currently operating SSPs to help address funding cuts and shortfalls as well as expand the number of SSPs nationwide by approximately 50 programs. These additional resources are urgently needed to reduce overdose deaths and the spread of costly infectious diseases.

Finally, expanding access to SSPs will reduce health care costs, including for infectious diseases treatment. The rise in injection drug use associated with opioid use disorder over the past decade is largely responsible for the 380% increase in hepatitis C cases and has been the cause of HIV outbreaks in communities across the nation. Hepatitis C treatment can cost more than \$30,000 per person, while HIV treatment can cost upwards of \$560,000 per person. Averting even a small number of cases has the potential to save millions in treatment costs in a single year.

To help the nation respond to this urgent overdose crisis, we urge Congress to provide \$120 million in funding for the Infectious Diseases and the Opioid Epidemic program at CDC/HHS in the LHHS appropriations bill and to remove language banning the use of federal funding for syringes.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical request. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact William McColl, senior consultant with Collier Collective at bmccoll@colliercollective.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

AIDS United
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Medical Women's Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
Black AIDS Institute
CAEAR Coalition
Center for Popular Democracy (CPD)
DanceSafe
Drug Policy Alliance (DPA)
Fast Track Cities Institute
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
Harm Reduction Coalition
HealthHIV
Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (HCMMSG)
HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute
HIV Medicine Association
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
John Snow, Inc. (JSI)
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Latino Commission on AIDS
Legal Action Center
NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)

National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
National Working Positive Coalition
PFLAG National
Positive Women's Network
Prevention Access Campaign
Rural Health Service Providers Network
Stop the Drug War
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
SWOP BEHIND BARS
The AIDS Institute
The Center for HIV Law and Policy
The Well Project
Treatment Action Group
U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus
Union for Reform Judaism
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Alabama

AIDS Alabama
Five Horizons Health Services
GoodWorks: North Alabama Harm Reduction
Southern AIDS Coalition
The 6:52 Project Foundation

Alaska

Alaskan Aids Assistance Association (Four A's) - Syringe Access Program
Homer Exchange

Arizona

Aunt Ritas Foundation
Phoenix Pride
Southwest Center

Arkansas

Central Arkansas Harm Reduction

California

A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)
Any Positive Change Inc.
APLA Health and Wellness
Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP)
Asian Liver Center, Stanford University School of Medicine
Berkeley Copwatch
Bienestar Human Services
Christie's Place
Clary Strategies
Desert AIDS Project (d/b/a DAP Health)
End Hep C SF
Face to Face
Glide Syringe Access Services (SAS)
Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego County

Harvey Milk LGTBQ Democratic Club
HealthRIGHT 360
HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County
Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction
Los Angeles LGBT Center
MCAVHN Care and Prevention Network
Northern Valley Harm Reduction Coalition
Public Safety SLO
Saint James Infirmary
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco Department of Public Health
San Francisco Hepatitis C Task Force
SLO Bangers Syringe Exchange and Overdose Prevention Program
The Sidewalk Project
The Spahr Center
Transitions Clinic
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD)

Colorado

Harm Reduction Action Center (HRAC)
Vivent Health Denver

Connecticut

Alliance for Living
Sex Workers and Allies Network - SWAN
Yale Program in Addiction Medicine

Delaware

Delaware HIV Services, Inc.

Florida

First Coast Recovery Advocates
NEU Health Solutions Inc
Saint Augustine Harm Reduction Collective
Suncoast Harm Reduction Project

Georgia

Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Georgia Equality
Georgia Overdose Prevention
HIV Dental Alliance
Phoenix Transition Program

Hawaii

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center
Hep Free Hawaii

Idaho

Idaho Harm Reduction Project

Illinois

Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center
AIDS Foundation Chicago
Broken No More

Center for Housing & Health
Chicago Drug Users' Union
Chicago Urban League
Jolt Foundation
Live4Lali
QC Harm Reduction
The Perfectly Flawed Foundation
The Porchlight Collective SAP

Indiana

A Better Life Brianna's Hope
HIV Modernization Movement-Indiana
Urban Survivors Union, Indiana

Iowa

Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition

Kentucky

Kentucky Harm Reduction Coalition

Louisiana

Capitol Area Reentry Program Inc.
CrescentCare
Women With A Vision

Maine

Amistad
Maine Access Points

Maryland

Addiction Connections Resource
Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
Charm City Care Connection
Maryland Communities United
MEDPEARL LLC
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) - Maryland Chapter
Voices of Hope, Inc.

Massachusetts

Fenway Health
Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern University School of Law
New England Users Union

Michigan

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
CARES of Southwest Michigan
Community Outreach Prevention and Education Network (COPE Network)
Harm Reduction Michigan
HIV/AIDS Alliance of Michigan
Lansing Area AIDS Network (LAAN)
Lansing Syringe Access
The Grand Rapids Red Project
UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond
Wellness AIDS Services

Minnesota

A. Reed Holtum Solutions
Hope House of St. Croix Valley
Southside Harm Reduction Services

Mississippi

Mississippi Harm Reduction Initiative

Missouri

University of Missouri, St. Louis - Missouri Institute of Mental Health

Montana

Open Aid Alliance

Nevada

Harm Reduction Center - Las Vegas (Trac-B Exchange)
Southern Nevada Health District

New Hampshire

HIV/HCV Resource Center
New Hampshire Harm Reduction Coalition

New Jersey

Hepatitis C Association
Hyacinth AIDS Foundation

New Mexico

New Mexico Dept. of Health

New York

BOOM! Health Harm Reduction Center
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
Coalition on Positive Health Empowerment
Faith in Harm Reduction
Harm Reduction Caucus at Columbia University School of Social Work
Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (HCMMSG)
Hispanic Health Network
Housing Works
NEXT Distro
Stop Stigma Now
VOCAL New York

North Carolina

Advocacy House
North Carolina AIDS Action Network
North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC)
Project Lazarus
Smoky Mountain Harm Reduction
Western North Carolina AIDS Project

North Dakota

Fargo Cass Public Health

Ohio

Caracole Prevention Program
Equitas Health
Ohio Asian American Health Coalition (OAAHC)

The "DIRT" Advocacy Movement
The HIV Sankofa Initiative

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Harm Reduction Alliance
Shots Tulsa

Oregon

Caring Ambassadors Program
Cascade AIDS Project
Equality Federation
HIV Alliance
OHSU Partnership Project

Pennsylvania

AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania
AIM Angels In Motion
Allies for Health + Wellbeing
Community Liver Alliance
Family Service Association of Bucks County
HepTREC
Lancaster Harm Reduction Project, Inc
Opioid Crisis Response Fund
Prevention Point Pittsburgh
SELF Inc.
Why Not Prosper

Puerto Rico

Intercambios

South Carolina

Challenges Inc

South Dakota

Lakota Youth Development

Tennessee

A Betor Way
Chattanooga CARES
Friends For Life, Corp
Music City PrEP Clinic

Texas

Legacy Community Health Services, Inc.
Lets Grow Beautifully Together Qmunity Center
Prism Health North Texas
Texas Harm Reduction Alliance (THRA)

Utah

Utah Naloxone

Vermont

AIDS Project of Southern Vermont

Virginia

Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition

Washington

Blue Mountain Heart To Heart
Conspiracy of Geniuses
Dave Purchase Project
Hepatitis Education Project
Reframe Health and Justice Consulting
The People's Harm Reduction Alliance

West Virginia

Community Education Group
Milan Puskar Health Right
West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute
West Virginia Exchange Union (WVEU)
West Virginia Hepatitis Academic Mentoring Partnership (WVHAMP)

Wisconsin

Vivent Health

Washington D.C.

Georgetown Medical AIDS Advocacy Group
Harm Reduction Experts Improving Lives (HIPS)